

Competition heats up as dragon visits WorldSkills

See pages 14 & 15



Pictures by Nick Linford for FE Week



Training providers turn on each other

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Reinis

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Training providers have called for talks on issues surrounding apprenticeships in the wake of heavy criticism.

A conference led by providers is being arranged for early next year to discuss concerns such as short apprenticeships.

It comes following numerous reports by *FE Week* on the current state of apprenticeships and also a further story by the *Mail on Sunday* last week, which claimed apprenticeships are “falling short of skills as firms collect millions”.

Lindsay McCurdy, group manager of LinkedIn: Apprenticeships London, which was initially set up for providers in the capital but is now open across England, is setting up the conference to tackle issues, while also highlighting the success of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship providers plan conference as criticism mounts over numerous “worthless” delivery models

The group has more than 800 members on the social networking site LinkedIn and around 90 have confirmed their intention to attend the summit, which is due to be held in March on a date and at a location to be arranged.

Mrs McCurdy is unhappy at apprenticeships being handed to already employed workers - a situation which *FE Week* has highlighted with the case of Asda.

The company is due to create 25,000 apprentices by the end of 2012, with the training by City & Guilds and funded by £8 million from the Skills Funding Agency, but it is believed none will amount to a new job.

She said: “Apprenticeships are about job creation, not giving already employed people qualifications.

“I am not against up skilling of already employed staff, but do not call

it apprenticeships.”

She also said: “The members of my group... have asked that we arrange a conference which is provider led to raise these issues and address them.

“I am not against the government giving money to up skill employed staff, it just should not be given under the name of apprenticeships.”

In the *Mail on Sunday*’s article, concerns were raised “about the term ‘apprentice’ becoming devalued.”

The story has since attracted a raft of comments on the *FE Week* website.

Kim Cook said: “The apprenticeship name is getting bad press, at a time when we should be growing good quality apprenticeships with employers.”

She added: “I have been in this arena for 25 years and have never seen anything like this. We need stricter control and auditing.”

Andy Wilson added: “We must be

careful not to undermine the overall apprenticeship brand which is becoming increasingly attractive amongst young people.”

Professor Alison Wolf, of King’s College London was commissioned by Education Secretary Michael Gove to report on vocational training.

She said: “Traditional apprenticeships have been very valuable for the economy and apprentices because they gave young people new skills plus the genuine workplace experience which they would otherwise not have obtained.

“The growing practice of re-labeling existing adult employees as ‘apprentices’ is, as far as I know, unique to this country, and particularly difficult to explain at a time when youth unemployment is at crisis levels.”

Have your say on www.feweek.co.uk

Monday 10 October 2011

www.feweek.co.uk

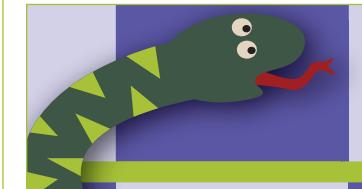
Campus round-up



Colleges making their Marco on *FE Week* campus round-up

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FE Week Games



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inside...

Department for Education launch 16-19 Funding Formula Review

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove has launched a consultation to reform and simplify the '16-19 funding formula', for implementation in 2013/14.

The announcement, published by the Department for Education (DfE) last Thursday, states: "Proposals in the consultation include moving away from the current complex system of funding on the basis of 'payment per qualification' to introduce a much simpler system of funding at the level of the learner.

"Such a change is essential if we are to make a reality of the proposals in Professor Alison Wolf's groundbreaking report on vocational education.

"It also supports the Government's aims of reducing bureaucracy for education providers and making the funding system simpler, more transparent and readily understood by all.

"Responses to the consultation are sought from 16-19 education and training providers in general and specialist further education colleges, sixth form colleges, maintained schools and Academy sixth forms as well as commercial and charitable providers, and Apprenticeship providers."

FE Week understands that the consultation launch was originally planned for May 2011 but the DfE delayed implementation so it could also consider the reform of 5-16 year-old funding.

The current formula was implemented in 2008/09 by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in an effort to simplify funding.

John Bolt, former national technical lead for funding at the LSC said: "I am pleased that the DfE and Young People's Learning Agency have now published the latest consultation. It was expected earlier this year, and will apply from 2013/14 and not a year earlier as was previously thought.

As ever, it is difficult to strike the right balance between simplicity, fairness and new Government policy, which is reflected within the numerous options within the report. There seems to be a move towards funding 16-18 learners in a similar way to pre-16 learners, which may simplify things for school sixth forms but less so for colleges."

The closing date for responses is Wednesday 4 January 2012.



Download at: <http://tinyurl.com/6b33u2w>

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FE Week expert

An inconvenient truth



In August of this year the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published a report of an enquiry into value for money in the education of those aged 16-18. It followed an investigation by the National Audit Office on the same subject but the committee itself took additional evidence from a number of expert witnesses. The full document, which does not take long to read, is available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cm-select/cmpubacc/1116/1116.pdf>.

The report deserves to be widely read, not least because it was not well reported in the education press. It does not appear to have surfaced in *FE Focus* in the *TES*. The BBC has a competent summary on its website at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-12820694> : but sadly the *Guardian* had a travesty of an article headed "Money is 'wasted on bad colleges'" <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/aug/16/badly-managed-colleges-money-wasted> the main thrust of which bore little relationship to anything the PAC had said.

Since the *Guardian* has been one of the few papers to report anything about FE in recent years, and generally enjoys a good reputation for informed and balanced journalism it is important to point out that the PAC makes no mention at all of 'bad colleges'. It most certainly does not, as the article explicitly states, warn that 'the government is wasting money by funding poorly-managed colleges.' Indeed when the PAC mentions colleges specifically it is to point out that their record in terms of increasing efficiency is superior to that of schools. They state for example: "As a result of fewer resources in the past, further education colleges have become more adept at making tough choices to improve value for money." They also point out that the accountability arrangements for colleges are clearer than those for sixth forms.

'Colleges were required to meet minimum levels of performance (based on success rates), and the Young People's Learning Agency set clear action plans where colleges failed to meet them. In contrast, local authorities were not consistent in their approach to dealing with poor performance in school sixth forms.'

The main focus of PAC criticism is clearly the government, not institutions and it aims its fire accurately at the complex and inconsistent arrangements for monitoring the performance of the sector, not at school heads or college principals.

There are in fact three main strands to the PAC report all of which have important implications for government policy. The first is that the committee is clear that larger institutions benefit learners. 'Larger providers benefit from economies of scale and can provide a wider choice of courses for their students. The evidence also suggests student achievement is higher in larger institutions'. The PAC is not the first to point to such evidence but the authority of the chief parliamentary watchdog on value for money is such that it must call into question the government's enthusiasm for opening yet more small sixth forms in areas well provided for by FE and sixth form colleges.

The second strand of the PAC report relates to collaboration. Some of the benefits of scale can be achieved by smaller providers it argues if they are able to collaborate, for example by sharing back office services. The competitive environment in which schools and colleges have to operate however acts as a powerful inhibitor of such collaboration and consequently restricts its impact. Taken together with the comments on the benefits of scale this undermines BIS proposals for the future shape of the FE landscape which once again advocates partnerships and seek to discourage merger.

It is however the third charge made by the committee that is perhaps the most serious. The systems of reporting and performance management for schools and colleges are so different that potential students cannot effectively exercise choice and government cannot be sure that it is obtaining value for money. Colleges have the more robust systems in place both in terms of efficiency and effectiveness but a direct comparison between the sectors is still frustrated.

It is hard to believe that a decade after coming together with colleges under the LSC school sixth forms still cannot produce reliable data on qualification success rates (QSR) that enable real comparison with FE. It is however reminiscent of claims by DES officials in the 1980s and 1990s that comparing the cost to the public purse of provision in schools and colleges was not possible owing to its technical complexity; and of course the fact that seven years after LSDA research definitively established the scale of the funding gap between schools and colleges officials have still failed to close it. The current target date for convergence of funding is 2015, well into the future.

Conspiracy theories are usually wrong but the difficulties encountered when trying to compare the performance of schools and colleges might be the exception. The Whitehall machine seems really reluctant to allow awkward comparisons to be made: could the reason be that the policy implications might just be too inconvenient.

FE Week profile

Lynne Sedgmore ~ her story

Picture by Nick Linford for *FE Week***Janet Murray****@jan_murray**

The Chief Executive of the 157 Group talks to *FE Week*

When Lynne Sedgmore passed the 11 plus, it made the local news. Few children from her council estate went to grammar school, and that year, she was one of four to make it. "I was brought up on one of the most problematic miners' estate in Newcastle-under-Lyme," she says.

"If you were a Crackley kid you didn't have any chances or hopes really."

But Sedgmore was "born wanting to learn" and, from an early age, made sure there were always plenty of books in the house. "My mum always used to say 'Lynne would ask for a book rather than sweets,'" she recalls.

Her parents, both originally from South Wales (or "pure Valley" as Sedgmore puts it) saw education as "the way out, the way to a better life." And while money was tight, her mum's "magic" financial management meant the family always had an annual holiday and the latest technology.

"They [her parents] made sure we had the best we possibly could. So as well as being the first to have a telly or a new car, we were the family who people on the estate looked up to. We

well respected and well liked on the estate."

Going up to secondary school – Clayton Hall Grammar School for Girls in Newcastle-under-Lyme - was a life changing experience. "Until then, I didn't realise how poor we were," she recalls. "The amount of money some of my friends had to spend was unbelievable, when, from the age of 14, I used to work to bring in extra money. A whole other world opened up for me about how much other people had."

The experience also opened her eyes to a range of cultural experiences - the theatre, literature, classical music and even new foods. "I remember the first time I had corn on the cob and I wasn't sure what to do with it. I had to watch what everyone else did before I ate mine," she says, laughing.

But being one of the only kids on the estate to go to grammar school had its downsides. "I used to have to wear a maroon cap with little bobbles on them, so there were times when they [others kids on the estate] would nick it, pull the bobble off and give it me back," she recalls. But mostly, she was able to take it in her stride. "If I had been a very timid, small person, I might also have been bullied, but I am not exactly a small, fragile, petite person, so I could definitely hold my own. I think I lived a kind of double life in that way."

At school, she was good at sport and "always managed to be in the top three" academically, but her rebellious streak stopped her from being head girl material.

"I had a tendency to challenge authority if I couldn't see a reason for it and I remember thinking I would never be head girl because I

caused too much trouble."

Nevertheless she went on to study English and American Literature at Kent University, thinking she might like a career as a probation officer. "I always had this idea that I wanted to give something back, if you like, to the friends I'd left behind when I went to grammar school," she says.

When she fell pregnant, during her second year of university, and everything changed. As she was already engaged to the son of a vicar (Sedgmore got engaged when she was still at school), there was no question of doing anything else but getting married. "I remember going home for the weekend and going back to uni and everyone going 'so what did you do this weekend?' and me going 'Oh I went off and had a big white wedding."

Sedgmore took her final exams when she was five months pregnant and after a year out after her daughter was born, went back to university.

While combining motherhood and study "wasn't easy," she completed her degree and went on to do teaching qualification at Madeley College in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Unable to get full-time teaching work (her local authority had, at the time, just made 200 redundancies), she fell into a job as a youth opportunities programme (YOP) supervisor and immediately "fell in love" with further education.

"I was working with lads on the canal towpath scheme – the kind of youngsters I had grown up with and people didn't really get," she says. "But what I found was I had an almost natural ability to know how to work with them and I just loved it. I knew I had found home and since that day I have never wanted to be anywhere else but FE."

When her husband was offered a job in London in the early 1980s, she applied for a job at Croydon College as a life and social skills lecturer and her FE career really began to flourish. A few years on, she was a senior lecturer and had discovered a talent for "spotting a new trend, writing and getting grants in" for new projects.

As well as Youth Training Scheme (YTS) pilots and community training programmes for unemployed adults, she was also involved in setting up so-called 'accredited training centres' where people from industry were trained to deliver their own training in the workplace. "We trained all the British Rail drivers in life in social skills tuition – it was such good fun," she recalls. "I have always been the person who says 'Can I do that?' or 'I'll have a go at that' so I really came into my own."

By 1986, she was director of marketing at Croydon College (having left and returned after an unhappy 18 months at Hackney College as head of curriculum and student services). She went on to become dean of Croydon Business School in 1989, at a time when colleges "were really beginning to take higher education seriously." While she says being a principal, "is the best job in the world."

Sedgmore only did it for six years - at Guildford College - before taking on the role of chief executive at the Centre for Excellence

in Leadership (CEL) which was four years of "incredibly hard but enjoyable work."

But the merger between CEL and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) was a challenging time, and after thirty years in the sector, Sedgmore was planning to retire and move to the country. Then the offer of the job at 157 Group came along and totally revitalised her.

Now 55, Sedgmore says she has no imminent plans to give up work, but she is excited to have found her retirement home – an old chapel in Somerset, complete with its own graveyard. While she hasn't "got round to living there properly yet" (she rents a flat in Guildford where she lives during the week), she is excited about her new home, which is currently undergoing renovation work.

When she is not working, Sedgmore is a "besotted grandmother" to her two grand daughters, who are eight and five.

She also has a strong interest in spirituality. Although her own upbringing was not in any way religious, she is fascinated by different faith traditions, is ordained as a interfaith minister (which means she can present ceremonies like christenings and offer spiritual guidance), is currently a student in the Ridhwan School (a form of spiritual teaching) and has studied the Enneagram (a method of analysing personality) for 20 years. "It's not about beliefs for me or imposing anything on anybody, it's more about the reality and how you become the best possible person you can be," she says.

Sedgmore describes herself as a "pathological" optimist. She is endlessly enthusiastic about the different roles in FE over her 30 year career, with the exception of Hackney College, which she says was "not a can-do culture" and she found very de-energising.

"It was around the time when the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was being disbanded and the college was struggling on 14 different sites.

I did my best and I think we did some good work, and we had an excellent team there, but it just wasn't for me – so I went."

While things have undoubtedly been tough for colleges in recent years – particularly in terms of budget cuts - there is a "real window of opportunity" in FE at the moment, she says. "The Coalition government is listening to us and giving us the kinds of freedoms and space that we have been asking for - for a long time.

"What I believe 157 can bring to the sector that is distinctive, is a way of working collectively to generate new kinds of business models, new ways of being flexible and lean, and offering something back.

"Because the 157 mission is a benevolent one, it is about serving the sector. That's not to say there are not lots of excellent colleges that are not in the 157 - I know that there are - but we happen to be a particular forum where those ideas and think pieces and new ways of working, particularly around the curriculum, and serving learners, can go to that new space we're in. For me, it's all about shaping the future."



Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service

2011/12 Data Collections

With the recent changes to FE funding arrangements, 2011/12 is seeing changes to the way ILR data is collected.

The introduction of the single ILR for 2011/12 has seen the Data Service redevelop its data collection systems, with the Learner Information Suite V19.01 and the 2011/12 Online Data Collections portal going live in September 2011 in time for providers to submit data for the R02 ILR return.

The latest LIS allows providers to convert existing flat file format ILR to the revised restructured XML ILR, as well as providing the functionality to merge files of different collection types, flat files and XML files.

The Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) went live on 31 July and replaces the Learning Aim Database from 2011/12 onwards.

We are now focussing on phase 2 of the replatforming of data collection systems project, which will include further developments to

OLDC, in particular the web interface and LIS will provide functionality for providers to perform migration. We will provide regular updates on developments to our systems on our website.

Data Quality

The Data Service will be releasing new Credibility Reports on 28 November 2011 based on data from the R03 ILR return. Timeliness Reports and Data Quality Dashboards will also be available from 04 January 2012 (for the R04 return) and ULN verification Reports will be available on 30 January 2012.

LRN for 2011/12

I would like to take this opportunity to also remind providers that the deadline for reporting changes to Learner Reference Numbers for 2011/12 is 12 October 2011. Further details on the process for reporting these changes can be found on our website.

The single Individualised Learner Record is here!

2011/12 is the year for simplification of funding, reducing bureaucracy, rationalisation of existing data collections, and the introduction of freedoms and flexibilities for the FE sector, as set out in the 2010 Skills Investment Strategy.

In line with the simplification agenda, the information authority has been working with the Data Service to deliver a single ILR collection defined and collected using Extensible Markup Language (XML), and the Data Service has changed its data collection systems to accommodate these changes.

This means for 2011/12 providers will send records for all of their learners in a single file submission, and can send data continuously during the year - either full returns containing all learners, or update only files for a subset of learners. The collections timetable for 2011/12

has been published and outlines the return dates for the academic year. To assist providers with the move to a single ILR we have published FAQs, online training tools, factsheets and presentations on our website, as well as holding webinar sessions in August for providers.

We have also recently closed consultation on change requests for the 2012/13 ILR and the information authority board agreed these changes at its board meeting in September. We will be publishing these shortly.

Also a final reminder for providers that whilst we have moved into the 2011/12 academic year, the hard close dates for the end of year ILR returns for 2010/11 are fast approaching. The deadline for the final 2010/11 Employer Responsive ILR return (ER13) is 11 November 2011 and for the final Learner Responsive ILR return (LR05) it is 21 November 2011.

Month two funding payments and Individualised Learner Record returns

We wrote to providers in August about changes in the way data is captured and returned to the Agency. The Agency paid providers (usually paid on actuals) on profile for the first Individualised Learner Record return (R01) of the 2011/12 contract year (19+ Adult Skills Budget, 16-18 Apprenticeships, Joint Investment Programme and European Social Fund).

For month 2 most providers will be paid a profile payment for the same activity. This activity will include the amount for Outcome Incentive Payment but will not include additional allocations issued through variations. For a small number of providers we will not automatically make a profile payment,

the Area Director will contact those providers. To make the profile payment, a signed contract for 2011/12 must have been returned to the Agency. Providers who have not signed and returned their contract will not be paid for month two.

Providers will need to submit their R02 Individualised Learner Record return and use the latest LIS V19.01 (available to download from the Data Service website) to check and validate their 2011/12 data to ensure it is valid prior to the R02 return date of 6 October 2011. For any queries please contact your relationship team in the first instance.
Source: Skills Funding Agency update issue 77 05/10/2011.

John Perks, Head of the information authority



Key dates for the 16-18 funding allocations are announced by the YPLA

The data that providers return to either the Department for Education, Data Service or YPLA directly are used for a number of key purposes.

One of these is the calculation of allocations for those providers that the YPLA funds.

The 2012/13 allocations round is imminent, and the following returns are the key ones that the YPLA expects to use, alongside data for earlier years, to calculate final allocations for FE and sixth form colleges:

- 2010/11 ILR LR05 (due for submission by 21st November 2011)
- 2011/12 ILR R04 (due for submission by 6th

December 2011)

- Bursary MI return (due for submission by 31st October 2011)

As previously communicated to providers that make ILR returns, 2011/12 is a year of considerable change, following the introduction of the single ILR.

The YPLA strongly recommends that providers submit early data returns (e.g. R02 and R03) to familiarise themselves with the new returns. This will minimise the risk of significant data errors being experienced around the key data return dates stated above.

Source: Young People's Learning Agency website 03/10/2011.

FE Week expert

Painting the Forth Bridge



I read recently that the phrase "painting the Forth Bridge" will soon be redundant – they have come up with some sort of new paint that will last almost indefinitely! I have always thought of improvement in FE and skills as a bit like "painting the Forth Bridge" ...a never ending quest, as wherever we are on that journey, there is always more to do.

It would be great if we could find that everlasting "improvement paint" for FE; one coat and job done. But we all know it's not like that. Improvement in FE takes hard work, persistence, constancy and application.

We know that consistently outstanding providers are distinguished by a common set of features.

They have a rigorous, established approach to quality assurance. Their systems are not only well designed, but are well used in reviewing performance and planning improvement. Their leadership is strong and frequently described as 'inspirational', 'dynamic' and 'firmly focused' on outcomes for learners. But with less funding to invest and more demands on the FE system's services to meet emerging economic and social needs, resources in terms of people, time and funding may be spread ever more thinly in fulfilling improvement objectives.

At LSIS our offer this year is designed to provide you with a framework in which you can best focus those resources.

The new offer will help you bring about improvement in LSIS's five main areas of activity:

- teaching and learning
- capacity for cost-effective curriculum design and development
- leadership, governance and management for innovation and improvement
- efficiency, innovation and new ways of working; and

• supporting the sector to influence the future.

We have specifically restructured our services to better inform the sector as a whole and influence future development in line with emerging needs. There will be increased opportunities to exchange information at regional and national levels, better use of evidence and knowledge from research, and continued dissemination of our policy analysis.

All the changes and developments within our service offer are the outcome of our extensive consultations with you as providers, with our sector partners and other sector bodies. The focus for this offer has been further determined through our Board and in particular through discussions at the LSIS Council comprising 30 sector elected representatives. This is to ensure the offer fully supports the sector in meeting future challenges set out in the sector-wide strategy framework New Freedoms: New Focus which we launched in our September newsletter together with the accompanying LSIS Strategic Intentions 2011-2014, containing the five strategic platforms for delivery.

Our offer is dynamic and will continue to evolve as we take stock of your changing needs. I welcome all feedback on what we offer, as that will help drive yet further improvement. And, while we all keep looking for that magic "improvement paint" LSIS will keep on building better services to support the sector to help itself improve learning and skills.

For more information on the LSIS Improvement Service Offer 2011-2012 please visit our website www.lsis.org.uk/Services/support-improvement/Pages/default

Rob Wye, CEO of The Learning and Skills Improvement Service

FE Week agitator

Vocational qualifications are ideal... but they're still for other people's children



WorldSkills has been and gone, all the hype, the advertising, the supplements, the drum banging... and now the silence is deafening.

Colleges try to whip up support from the media, but it's short lived, the energy dissipates like the steam from the industry-standard

"The pile 'em high and sell em cheap attitude to vocational qualifications must stop now."

hair straighteners once used to style a winner.

The skills circus has left town, and in its wake Agitator is wondering if anything will change. Vocational qualifications are as low down the education 'food chain' as they've ever been.

Whose fault is that? The AoC blames teachers and careers advisors and, to add insult to injury we're losing Connexions, just as they were getting the hang of Diplomas, VRQs and the like.

Lecturers blame parents for not understanding anything but the golden standard of the hallowed A-level.

Colleges blame the plethora of qualifications, programmes and courses on offer, the confusing titles and cacophony of exam boards touting their 'tickets'. We need constant flag bearers for vocational education.

The Prime Minister was extoling the virtues of apprenticeships at the Tory Conference last week. But he's not credible when talking up skills. He's not 'been there nor done that' like our own valuable lecturers.

Sure, we've been listening to all sorts of leading politicians waving the flag for apprenticeships; they've even employed a few to accompany them as they saunter up and down the corridors of power. But it feels too orchestrated, a falsehood that is seen as a crowd pleaser.

To paraphrase the political messages; ap-

prenticeships will save the economy – apprenticeships are the answer... But, how can that be when corporate giants like Asda admit that none of the 25,000 apprenticeships that they've been crowing about equate to any new jobs?

Vocational education will only enjoy an elevated position when we get the quality right. Too many organisations are taking short cuts. How can we be delivering Level 2 NVQs in two days and apprenticeships in just six weeks and expect Joe Public to take vocational qualifications seriously?

How can two thirds of apprenticeships delivered in the UK be in retail (which wasn't even a category at WorldSkills) and expect people up and down the country to think they are competition to A-levels?

The Mail on Sunday last week told its middle England readers how you can follow an apprenticeship that includes removing litter, dog fouling and emptying waste bins. I'd say it was a joke, but it's not even funny.

We have got ourselves into a real mess with vocational education, it's one true standard was the apprenticeship, but we've gone an messed that up too by flooding the market with cheap imitations and confusing the punter.

If Rolex or Hermes made apprenticeships they'd have customs officers raiding the SFA (Skills Funding Agency) faster than you can say 'counterfeit'. And there lies the problem. The one brand that bolstered vocational qualifications has been soiled, and we as a sector have helped publicise its dilution.

How? By every single press release, web site and prospectus put out for 'Joe Public' to read headlines like "provider puts 200 students through their Call Centre qualification in record time" or, "Level 1 student is awarded certificate in pouring glass of milk."

The pile 'em high and sell em cheap attitude to vocational qualifications must stop now. We need to bang the quality drum again and again and again, we need to encourage the self-fulfilling prophecy: if you tell people often enough then they will believe it. But, only if it's actually true.

FE Week explores...**If FE were given the extra bin collection money I would spend £250 million on...**

Dick Palmer,
Principal of City
College Norwich

temporary and the benefits not sustained from a one-off cash injection into the sector. I would rather see the country's 237 FE or so colleges each given £1 million to become entrepreneurial colleges, using the money to embed enterprise skills across all curriculum areas and to stimulate new initiatives to generate additional future income.

We all know that, collectively, colleges could make a real and lasting impact in their communities with an extra £250 million. Over the last 24 months colleges and our students have felt the painful effects of funding cuts across the board, and many would undoubtedly call for the most damaging effects of these cuts to be reversed if we had an extra £250 million at our disposal.

This could take the form of partially restoring the EMA, providing a travel subsidy for students or additional severe hardship funds to prevent the most disadvantaged from dropping out of education. Whilst I would welcome all of these measures (and more) to support students to stay in education, the impact would be

The 157 Group would use a £250 million windfall to make a significant difference in two specific areas of the FE sector;

1. Improving social mobility through improving access and success for disadvantaged students and;
2. Leveraging additional investment in skills by employers and individuals.

Specifically; £140 million could implement Simon Hughes' proposal to continue to fund Access to HE programmes for around 70,000 students per year.

A tiny proportion of the funds would put an end to Care to Learn cuts for the poorest young parents.



Graham Hoyle
OBE, chief
executive, As-
sociation of
Employment
and Learning
Providers

Pre-apprenticeships and Foundation Learning should be expanded. The coalition government is to be applauded for setting itself the aspiration of an extra 250,000 apprenticeships by the end of this Parliament. With nearly a million young people out of work and employers calling for a better skilled workforce, this is clearly the right strategy to underpin a sustainable economic recovery.

While AELP strongly believes in the concept of all-age apprenticeships to improve business competitiveness, we understand if politicians and others wish to see the majority apprenticeship growth benefit younger people. There is however a major challenge which is that not all young people leave school ready to start a full

In other words, treat the 'bin money' as an investment that could provide real financial returns to colleges as well as equipping our students with the enterprise and employability skills that employers are crying out for.

At City College Norwich we are working with North Herts College, Gateshead College and New College Nottingham on what does a truly entrepreneurial college look like. We are already seeking to do this in a number of ways. We have invested in a dedicated resource, our Enterprise Zone, where students will be able to come and develop the full range of enterprise skills – from identifying an opportunity, to developing new products and services, and pitching these to potential investors.



Lynne
Sedgemore, chief
executive of the
157 Group

A small amount could pump prime a collective FE social enterprise to work with NEETs and benefit the wider community.

£50 million could be used to match fund increased employer investment in skills development for employees of all ages.

£100 million invested into half a million learning accounts if individuals matched it would generate £100m. investment in skills.

apprenticeship. Currently there is an unmet demand in Level 1 vocational learning or pre-apprenticeship provision that urgently needs to be addressed.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister responded to AELP's representations on the matter by announcing the creation of the Access to Apprenticeships programme. Initially, 10,000 places will be available and this is very welcome, but set against the scale of the NEET challenge, many more places are needed. The DfE's Foundation Learning programme also forms part of a fuller response and AELP is advocating a much greater integration of education, employment and skills strategy at a departmental level to help develop the response.

Therefore we believe that any extra funding would be well directed at expanding the number of places available on Access to Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning if they help lead a young person into sustainable employment or a full apprenticeship – an outcome which should be viewed and counted positively by the DfE as it is by BIS and DWP.

Your tweets on #FEnotbins**A selection of readers suggestions via Twitter**

@dickpalmerccn: #FEnotbins - I'd give every #fecollege a £1m each (237) as long as they became truly #entrepreneurial so as to properly #startupbritain

@siblood: @NickLinford @feweek I would give £2.5 million to 100 colleges. Allow for redev of specialised areas and focus on T&L issues #FEnotbins

@EMPRA: I'd use to bring back proper careers advice/support and stop the inevitable increase in NEETs that current Ed policy is causing #FEnotbins

@shanermann: @FEWeek I would work toward reinstating EMA or Free travel for students. Which ever I could afford from the two #FEnotbins

@NikolaiPBaker: #FEnotbins I would give 25m to ten fe colleges around the uk,

to improve the areas of creative arts and hospitality with modern equipment
@olwog: @NickLinford #FEnotbins Re-establish Adult Ed to help build communities and reduce illiteracy and innumeracy

@RichfromtheHudd: #FEnotbins #HENotbins #NHSnotbins #careersadvicenotbins #teachersnotbins #scienzenotbins #theartsnotbins £250

@NickLinford: I'd spend £250m on increasing the 16-18 @Apprenticeships funding rate. @skillsfunding reducing it by 2% this year was just stupid #FEnotbins

@SummersNicholas: @NickLinford £250m on giving every learner a 'day out' that would be relevant to their studies and inspire them to succeed. #FEnotbins

@chrisdelahunty: #fenotbins give college leavers support and interest free loans to start up their own businesses



**ANNUAL
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Kenilworth,
Nr Warwick,
CV8 2LD

A liberated vocational qualifications market in 2012 - reality or an illusion?

The Federation of Awarding Bodies Annual National Conference is a great opportunity to hear the latest position on a range of areas affecting vocational qualifications from high profile speakers with workshop sessions intended to provide a more detailed insight into specific topics of interest. The conference programme encourages networking with colleagues in awarding bodies and related organisations and some key suppliers of consultancy and other services will have stands in the exhibition area.

Speakers include:

- Glenys Stacey, Chief Executive of Ofqual - A grown-up regulated industry
- Nick Linford, Managing Director of Lsect - The shape of the market in 2012
- Caroline Roberts, UKCES - Skills for Growth – the job for the awarding industry

Seminar sessions include:

- Funding 14 - 18 - Peter Lauener, Chief Executive from YPLA
- Funding post 19 – Janet Ryland, Skills Funding Agency
- Economic regulation - the drivers of a healthy market in qualifications - Emma Cochrane, Ofqual
- An update on the new role of UKCES and the SSCs – Caroline Roberts, UKCES
- Trends in provider procurement – Paul Warner, AELP and Joy Mercer, AoC
- Progress towards transformation – Julie Swan, Ofqual
- Reliability in Vocational Qualifications - Dennis Opposs, Ofqual and Andrew Boyle, City & Guilds
- Implementation of the Wolf report – DfE

To see the full programme and to register visit:
<http://www.awarding.org.uk/public/nationalconference>

**ON:
7TH
AND 8TH
NOVEMBER 2011**

The Federation of Awarding Bodies is the trade association representing organisations that award vocational qualifications in the UK. Our membership exceeds 115 organisations recognised by Ofqual, CCEA or DfES. For further information visit www.awarding.org.uk.

FE Week events...

FE Week at FESTIVAL

Shane Mann
@shanermann

It was a feast of further education (FE) as hundreds of youngsters flocked to Birmingham to launch a series of student-led campaigns for this academic year.

On Monday, more than 200 FE student representatives attended the single largest National Union of Students' (NUS) FE specific event, FEstival.

It brought together Student Officers from Students' Unions from across the UK to mark the launch of a series of NUS campaigns for 2011/12 and the start of a new academic year.

The free, one day event, was held at Birmingham University's Guild of Students and built on the success of the first FEstival back in 2009, aiming to stimulate and motivate student representatives and officers for the year ahead through structured and informal networking, campaigning and skills workshops and campaign launches.

Even our own Managing Editor, Nick Linford, held a workshop focusing on funding in the sector.

The main hall was decked out with bunting, balloons and there was plenty of music being played in order to create a festival atmosphere. At 10am before the bulk of attendees arrived NUS staff were buzzing with excitement about the day's line up.

The event kicked off at 11am with a key note speech from Toni Pearce, Vice President (VP) FE NUS, who introduced the event and launched the NUS FE priority campaign for the year ahead, Fair Necessities. This year's priority campaign looks at equipping students' unions with the tools and skills to campaign against the cuts made to enrichment funding in the UK.

During her key note speech when launching the campaign, Pearce said, "enrichment funding was first introduced in 2000 to provide 16-19 year old in full time further education access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and extra learning support including, tutorials, pastoral care and citizenship. The Government has made a 75 per cent cut in this service which will have an impact on student lives and force colleges in making tough decisions around which services to prioritise."

The toolkit is designed for both students and staff working in students' union and is available online – tinyurl.com/6h39fmv.

FE Week has since learnt that there are plans for NUS to release their very own versions of the Jungle Book classic, *Look for the Bear Necessities*.

There is often a perception in NUS that it is only the remit of the VPFE to represent FE students. Following on from Pearce's key note speech, there was a Q&A session with the other 4 vice presidents and the National President, Liam Burns. This was a first for NUS, never before had all of the VPs and President



Toni Pearce, VP (FE) for the NUS under the bunting at FEstival

Photographs: Nick Linford

been in attendance together to discuss how their own remits work to benefit FE.

The VPs went into detail on the various ways they are representing FE over the coming year, from the VP Society and Citizenship outlining an exciting new partnership with Oxfam to build citizenship in FE to the VP Union Development announcing Activism 2011, a day which will focus on training student officers on how to campaign effectively.

During the lunch break another campaign was launched by the VP Welfare, Pete Mercer. By way of parking a red double decker bus outside the venue, Mercer launched the Get on the Bus campaign. FEstival goers were encouraged to "Get on the Bus" in-time for a launch speech from the VP Welfare.

Mercer explained the campaign aims to highlight the issues that students face regarding the cost of travel in the UK. Aimed at FE colleges, the campaign will see a bus tour around the UK to encourage FE students to approach their local councils in order to improve travel subsidies for young people.

In between the campaign launches and speeches there were numerous workshops that attendees could choose from. Workshops on offer varied from campaigning tips for students' unions, broadening membership, enterprise students' unions and adult education funding.

Speaking to *FE Week* after FEstival, Larni Baird, President, Aberdeen College Students'

Union said: "I made the epic journey from Aberdeen to come along to today's event. It was truly overwhelming to see so many FE student officers attending Festival. I have been an officer in the student movement now for 2 and a half years and never seen an FE event so well attended. But not only was attendance high, the calibre of officers and their enthusiasm was inspirational."

Pearce formally closed FEstival with a vote of thanks to everyone that had contributed to what had been for her "one of the most amazing events she had ever attended." Speaking after FEstival, Pearce said, "Today has been incredible, not only because so many FE students came along, but because so many are now engaged and want to get out there and campaign for their members. Whether that be for the reinstatement of EMA, increases in transport subsidy or votes at 16. Our members, here today, showed that students in FE have a bigger voice than ever before."

FEstival was certainly one of the, if not most, successful FE specific events that NUS has staged in recent years. It has been a strategic aim of the organisation in recent years to engage with more with FE students. Events such as this certainly prove they have engaged with more FE students than ever before. *FE Week* will be keeping up to date with all the latest news from the campaigns over the coming year.

FESTIVAL saw the launch of several NUS campaigns for the year ahead.

Fair Necessities

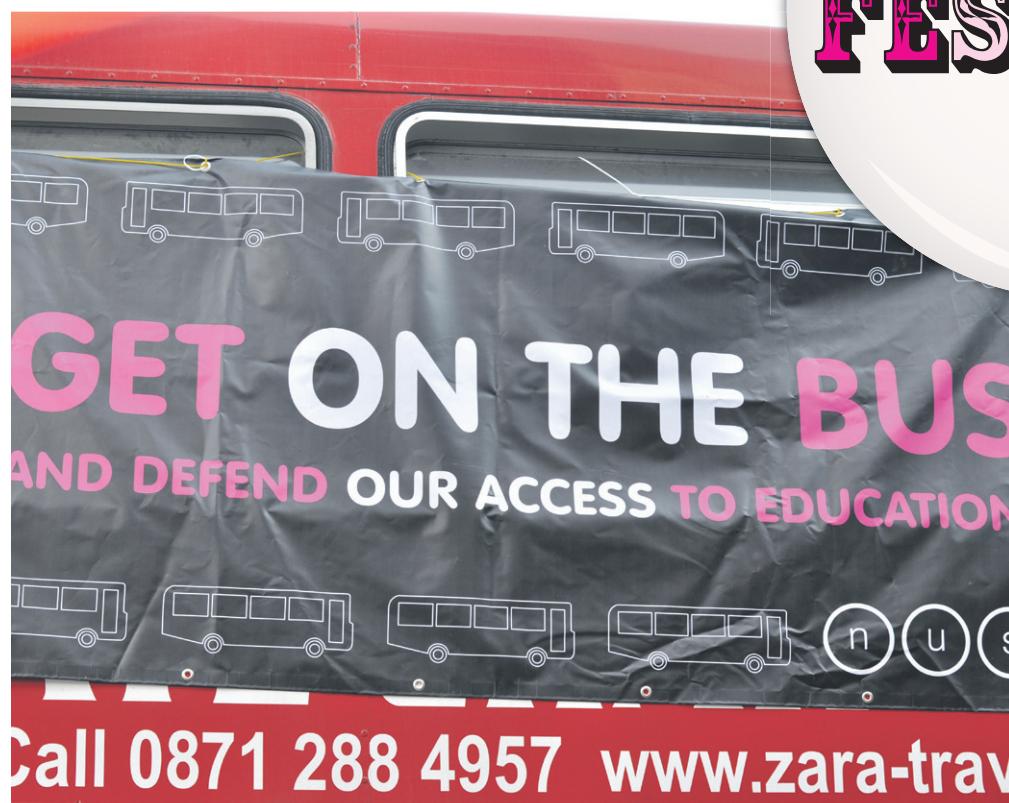
The Fair Necessities focusses and campaigns against the 75% cuts made to enrichment budgets in the UK. The campaign will provide Unions with a toolkit designed to aide officers with their campaigns locally.

Get on the Bus

This campaign focusses on the cost of transport to students in FE. The campaign will see a Double-decker Bus tour the country in the attempt to mobilise students to lobby their local council for fairer transport subsidies.

IAG

Another campaign will focus on the removal and changes to Information, Advice and Guidance services and calls for these services to better funded and impartial.



FE Week gets technical

FE Week brings you, on one handy **pull-out**, the slides from the Lsect workshop at NUS FEStival (see page 8). Electronic copies of all Lsect slides are sent to Gold Members. Subscribe at: www.feweek.co.uk

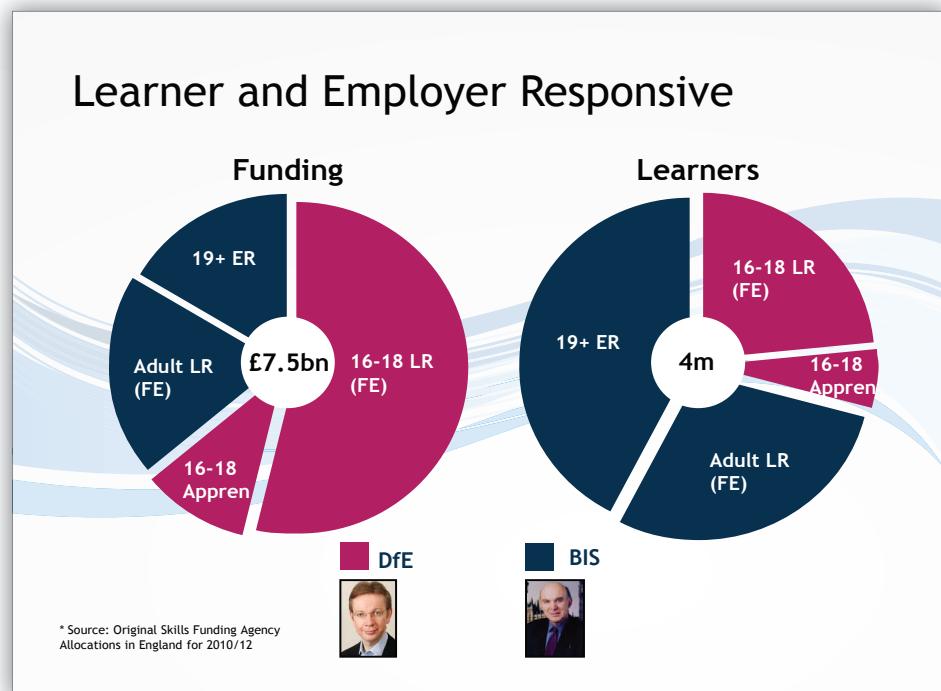
Adult Education Funding

A summary of Skills Funding Agency funding

Presented by Nick Linford
Managing Director of Lsect
Managing Editor of FE Week

NUS FEStival
3 October 2011

Lsect
Learning & skills ~ events, consultancy and training



The colleges and training providers

1,081 providers have SFA contracts
Average contract size: £2.8m

Smallest College: Sixth form colleges have £0
Average FE College: Approx. £8m
Largest College: Newcastle College Group £49m

Smallest training provider: Age Concern (MK) with £3,000
Largest training provider*: JHP Group Limited with £52m

*Excluding UFI with £122m

The college sector in numbers

Colleges in the UK	414
Colleges in England	347
General Further Education Colleges	224
Sixth Form Colleges	94
Land-based Colleges	16
Art, Design and Performing Arts Colleges	3
Specialist Designated Colleges	10
Colleges in Scotland	41
Colleges in Wales	20
Colleges in Northern Ireland	6

Skills Funding Agency funding and policy only for England
Source: AoC website

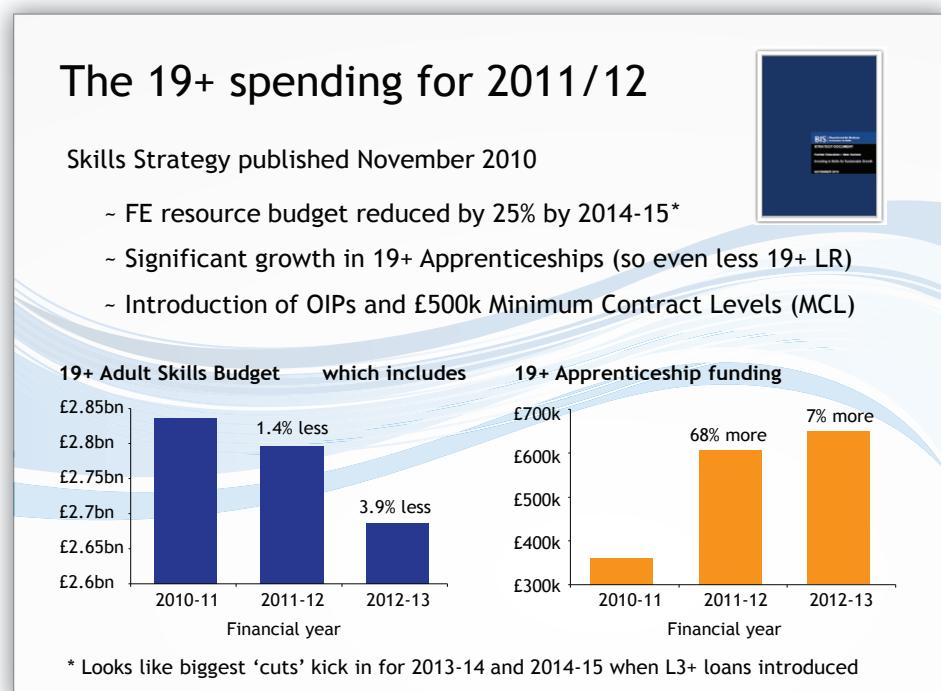
2011/12 BIS & Skills Funding Agency docs

Skills Strategy
<http://tinyurl.com/3x8dz2h>

Skill Funding Agency Guidance Notes 5, 6, 7 and 8
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/allthelatest/guidancenotes/>

Skill Funding Agency Funding and Eligibility Rules (soon to publish version 3)
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>

Skill Funding Agency Updates (every Wednesday)
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/allthelatest/providerupdate/>



It's all to play for : FE Adult Funding

19+ concluding summary : now...

Less funding overall, and directed towards:

- ~ Paying to get someone off benefits and into work (OIP) saves the Treasury. Could it become DWP funded as part of 'Skills Conditionality'?
- ~ Paying to train people in work, mainly via 'high quality' Apprenticeships (Level 2 - 5) and with significant employer cash fee contribution. Need employer buy-in

Will much full-time 19+ FE provision exist in the future?

HE in FE likely to be a growth market

Single Adult Skills Budget creates a more open market

FE Reform Consultation : future...



Published 16 August
Deadline 21 October

Just 17 days left
to respond

1. Vision for the FE landscape and shape of the sector
2. Introducing level 3 / 4 loans and sharing responsibility for investing in skills
3. FE college and provider freedoms and flexibilities
4. Simplifying the funding system
5. Teaching, learning and qualifications
6. Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning
7. Review of literacy and numeracy provision for adults
8. Delivering higher education and skills
9. Deregulation and devolution



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FE Week campus round-up



Marco Pierre White brings a bit of good taste to Chichester College

World famous chef, Marco Pierre White, impressed and intrigued Hospitality students at Chichester College with stories of his rise within the industry. His calm and measured attitude had students on the edge of their seats to note stern words of advice and inspirational anecdotes.

Marco said: "Luck gives the opportunity and it's the awareness of mind that lets you take advantage of it."

His first jobs were low-paid and basic, but gave him critical experience of a working kitchen.

When asked about his thoughts on apprenticeships, he replied: "Apprenticeships are key! You have to get out there and knock on doors, even if you have to work for free."

On hearing stories from the fine restaurants

in Paris and London, Marco's long-term dream became the achievement of three Michelin stars and five red knives and forks, both the highest accolades in the hospitality industry. Today, only the Ritz has five red knives and forks but no stars.

The chef told students: "Discipline is essential; staying focused. Never give up on your dreams. It's all about belief in yourself."

Following a book-signing, students served lunch for Marco, Hospitality staff and principal, Shelagh Legrave, in the college's Goodwood Restaurant.

It was a magical experience for the students hosting a culinary legend on the college premises in just the first fortnight of their course - no doubt an occasion that will be a feature on their CVs.



Central Sussex College senior managers 'Have a Go' at learning some new skills

Colleges Week saw students turn the tables on senior staff at Central Sussex College, when the Principal, Dr Russell Strutt, and his Executive Team returned to the classroom to 'Have a Go' at learning some new skills.

Dr Strutt and Executive Director for HR and Communications, Jenny Poore, got hot under the collar when they tried their hand at Blacksmithing in their first session and 'kneaded' to really pay attention when their second session saw them preparing bread rolls and duchesse potatoes for the College's training Restaurant, Le Cordon Vert.

Meanwhile Deputy Principals, Suri

Araniyasundaran and Adrian Dodwell, donned their tunics and headed off to the College's Intuition Salon to be taught the art of manicure. Two brave students were filed, buffed and polished - with mixed results! Their second session saw them don overalls and work boots and head to the brick workshop where they were taught how to mix and handle mortar, and how to lay a brick wall.

The Colleges Week activity was a real eye-opener for both staff and students, with all four leaders discovering new talents, and the students who taught them showing real expertise and confidence.

Harlow College finds Jan's Apprentice



Janet Murray is a freelance education journalist, writing mainly for The Guardian and well as *FE Week* and the TES. Jan has been freelancing for ten years. She said: "I found I was getting really busy and having to turn down work, no self employed person wants to do that."

"I thought about hiring a researcher, but decided as an education journalist, who also happens to write an awful lot about apprenticeships... that I ought to really put my money where my mouth is and train somebody on the job."

Over the years Janet has uncovered lots of myths about apprentices, she said; "There are lots of misconceptions about apprenticeships, the biggest one being that the government pays their wages!"

Janet will be paying her apprentice £6.08 an hour for 30 hours a week: the minimum wage for apprentices is just £2.50 an hour and Janet is hoping that her apprentice will also be able to do her NCTJs whilst training.

After a grueling two-day selection process Janet picked Rhian Jones from a field of 50 young people. Rhian is 22 and has done a variety of customer facing jobs before coming into journalism, and is really raring to go.

Rhian said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for me and I'm so pleased that I managed to stand out from the crowd. I started at Harlow College last week and feel like my feet haven't touched the ground.

I've been blogging for WorldSkills and visited The Guardian offices - it's all go, and so far, so good."



West Suffolk College gets into gear

A team of ten intrepid cyclists from West Suffolk College completed the 45 mile Palace to Palace Challenge from Buckingham Palace to Windsor Castle in September, raising £1600.

The Palace to Palace Challenge is a fundraising event for the Prince's Trust.

Team Captain Sherry Fry, Head of School of Participation at the College, said: "The atmosphere was fantastic as 3,000 cyclists took part to raise money for the Prince's Trust.

"The West Suffolk Wanderers managed to raise a staggering amount of more than £1,600. This was a fantastic achievement.

"All the team had a great time and are keen to do it next year, hopefully with an even bigger team!"

Team West Suffolk Wanderers:

Cyclists: Staff members Sherry Fry, Michael Nelson, Angela Whatley, Angela Gant, Cathy O'Brien, Martyn Wagner, Ola Anderson, Peter Harbron, Tom Thirkettle and Apprentice Will Curtin.

Support team:

Sharon Parmiter and Andy McGowan.

The Prince's Trust supports over 5,000 young people each year to help improve their life chances. The team of staff involved in the challenge are Further Education professionals who are also dedicated to helping young people raise aspirations and improve their life prospects.

Key appointment at Derby College



Derby College has appointed Paul Deane as Deputy Principal – Registrar, with responsibility for the cross-College functions that impact on the learner journey.

Paul, who joins Derby College from Lincoln College where he was Vice Principal – Planning and Funding, will oversee Funding, Registry and Information Services, Student Services and Inclusion, Marketing, and IT functions at the College.

After graduating from the University of Manchester with an Economics degree Paul worked in buying and merchandising in retail in London. He then gained a Masters in Software Development at Huddersfield University and worked in the chemical industry and for Huddersfield University designing and implementing software and hardware across Europe before moving into local government and then further education.

He was in charge of Information Services and IT at Joseph Priestley College, now part of City College, in Leeds. Whilst in Leeds he gained an MBA from Leeds University and moved to Lincoln College in 2004.

Paul said: "Derby College is a large and diverse organisation which has invested heavily to provide unrivalled facilities for students to learn and thrive.

"Like all colleges, we face significant challenges in terms of funding and the need to become more streamlined and efficient whilst delivering ever better services to learners and employers.



Get suited, booted and recruited at Filton College

Young people currently not in education, employment or training are being given the opportunity to undertake courses to enhance their employability.

The two-week intensive programmes being offered at Filton College will enable 16-18 year olds to stand out and get noticed by potential employers.

Starting on October 10, the exclusive fast-track programmes include; manual handling, food hygiene, first aid, customer service, sales and driving theory preparation.

The tailor-made courses will also integrate the necessary skills needed at interview, including; CV writing, interview techniques, presentation skills and how to best sell yourself.

The college is also offering every learner on the programme a free outfit. Courtesy of George at ASDA, students will be measured up and kitted out with a brand new suit ready for interview.

Sara-Jane Watkins, Vice Principal comments: "We are now offering a number of short programmes for young people who have some formal education but who now find themselves not in employment, education or training – those unfortunates are patronisingly referred to as NEETS – we refer to these young adults as 'inbetweeners'. Many of these 'inbetweeners' are individuals who have reached the end of their academic education and do not want to, or could not cope with progression to the next academic level."



Vision West Notts on the road to fundraising

Students from Vision West Notts set the pace during a charity walk this week.

A group of hairdressing students took part in a fancy dress walk to raise cash for the British Heart Foundation and Breast Cancer Awareness.

Aimee Powell, Sophie Ingleby, Jordan Johnson, Paige Smith and Katie Wood (not pictured) set off from The Academy - the

college's hair and beauty training salon and visited other college sites to collect donations from students.

Learner coach Lee Bunting, who helped the students to prepare for the walk, said: "The learners were very enthusiastic in organising this activity. Through this one activity they raised over £250 for the charities and I'm very proud of their efforts."



New College Nottingham student gets Silver

Scott Elsmore, 20, has been awarded silver at the UK final of SkillBuild – Britain's biggest construction skills competition.

Scott, who studied plastering at New College Nottingham (ncn), reached the final after competing in the East Midlands regional heat held at ncn Basford Hall earlier this year.

He's now in the running to represent the UK in the next WorldSkills competition in Leipzig, Germany in 2013.

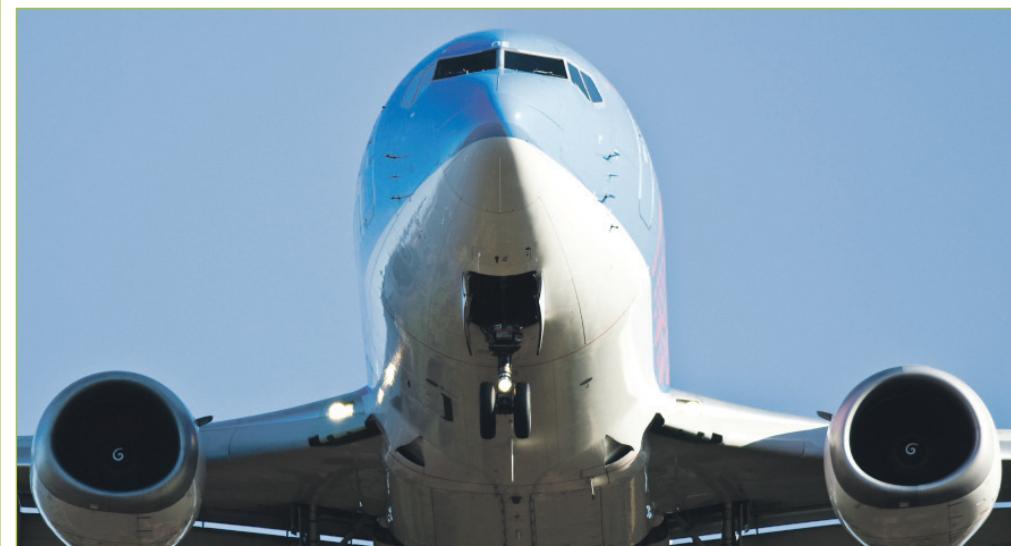
As the largest multi-trade competition in the UK, SkillBuild covers a wide range of crafts

including bricklaying, carpentry, painting and decorating, plastering, roofing, and tiling.

NCN Head of Faculty for Construction, Shaun Hunt, said: "Scott has gone from strength to strength since starting at ncn."

"He has completed his Plastering Diploma Level 2 and 3 with us and is now training to become a Construction Lecturer whilst employed as a Technician at our Basford Hall campus."

"It's wonderful to see Scott passing on his skills and experience to our current students."



Bournemouth & Poole College's course delivers a smooth landing

One of the world's leading aviation support service companies enjoyed a smooth landing at Bournemouth and Poole College. Servisair, which operates aircraft ground support services at Bournemouth International Airport, checked-in with the first crop of bright young students studying on the college's highflying Aviation course.

The really good news is that the majority on the course can expect to be offered interviews for posts with the company when the course ends.

That's because Servisair decided to forge direct links with the college after the course was founded.

With nine people on board for the new course, fifty per cent will be guaranteed interviews with Servisair once they've completed their 25 weeks at the college.

The company, which has 16,000 employees

worldwide and handles millions of aircraft movements globally through its ground support services, has helped design the college course. It leads to a City and Guilds Qualification.

Adrian Martin, head of travel, tourism and sport academy at Bournemouth and Poole College, said: "The aviation industry has a certain charisma and drama and with a locally based company on board with us the sky's the limit for this course," said Adrian

John Barber, Servisair Station Manager at Bournemouth Airport is delighted to be involved with the Aviation course.

He said: "Bringing young people into this industry is essential as it gives an energy and vibrancy to the workplace and that results in better service to our customers and the travelling public, we all are looking forward to being a part of this process."

WorldSkills 2011 opens with a bang

FE Week takes a look at what's on at this years WorldSkills event at the ExCel in London

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

With a rush of activity and a buzz of excitement, the world's largest international skills competition arrived on UK shores.

WorldSkills London 2011 - dubbed the skills Olympics - engulfed ExCel London, on Wednesday ahead of four-days of competition to find the best-of-the-best the skills sector has to offer.

Before the 944 competitors, representing 51 nations, got underway, the nearby O2 Arena hosted the opening ceremony on Tuesday.

Chairman of WorldSkills London 2011 Chris Humphries and Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg officially marked the start of the skills competition, jobs and careers event, before a feast of entertainment, including dancing, singing and the traditional flag ceremony.

However, once the formalities - and the pleasantries between the entrants - were over, it was down to the hard graft of the competition the following morning as the ExCel flung its doors open for the first time.

Speaking to *FE Week* just hours after thousands of people began flocking into the exhibition centre, Aidan Jones, the chief executive of WorldSkills London 2011, said: "It's going brilliantly."

"We had a fantastic opening ceremony at the O2 on Tuesday night and we were very pleased to welcome Nick Clegg to join us."

"I was then lucky enough to be here when the roller shutters opened for the first time and people crossed them into the hall."

"It was like the Christmas sales. My heart was ticking really fast, seeing after three years of working for this that people were coming through the doors ready to enjoy the skills on show and on offer."

However, Mr Jones does not just see this as an important event for the competitors - he also sees it as vital for the future of the nation.

He added: "There has never been a more important time to show the UK that skills shape our world and the future success of Britain's businesses depend on a highly skilled workforce."

"We hope WorldSkills London demonstrates to the world how talented young British people are."

While the competitors got down to the nitty-gritty action of their chosen skill, the halls filled with visitors - and not forgetting the event's ambassadors, who proudly patrolled the arena to will the competitors on.

One of those was Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards, who became Britain's first Olympic ski jumper when he took to the slopes at the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988, becoming a national hero.

However, it was as a plasterer the former Olympian spread his wings, having grown up in a family of plasterers.

As an ambassador for WorldSkills London 2011, he was delighted to watch the event unfold and cheer on Team UK.

He said: "I split my time now with Eddie 'The Eagle' work and when I'm not doing that I'm plastering ceilings and walls."

"This year was the first time I'd heard of the event and now that I'm finally here, I'm really looking forward to getting out on the shop floor."

When arriving at the vast exhibition centre, he was surprised to see how big it was and how many schoolchildren were attending.

The first day of the event also saw the Junior WorldSkills event and a raft of primary schools invited to attend.

Eddie said: "There were a lot of schoolchildren looking around which is wonderful as most people think about university to study,



but there are lots of things you can do without going to university."

He was also keen to 'Have a Go' at the other trades and skills on offer available at the event to try himself, adding: "Who knows, I might get into something else. I'm all for learning."

Another ambassador, who knows what it is like to perform on the world stage in front of thousands of people, is Olympic gold medallist Jason Gardener - and he was delighted to support Team UK.

The sprinter, who won gold in the 4x100 metre relay at the 2004 summer Olympics games in Athens, said: "When I walked into the ExCel, I thought 'wow, this place is enormous'. It blew my mind."

He added: "It was great to meet Team UK and the competitors in the send-off event last week."

"Team UK have been prepared, they've gone through a rigorous two years of training,

they've had mentoring and developed their skills and identified areas to improve."

Businessman and star of BBC Two show *Dragon's Den*, Theo Paphitis was also on hand to show his support for the skills sector.

He said: "Skills are vital to ensuring the UK's future as one of the world's biggest economies."

"Skills not only provide the talent organisations need to thrive, evolve and grow, but also give people a solid grounding on which to start their enterprises."

"By encouraging and nurturing those who take vocational routes - and raising awareness of the great opportunities out there for skilled workers - we can ensure the UK has the skills we need for the future."

For a full *FE Week* round-up, including results, from WorldSkills London 2011, see our website www.feweek.co.uk on Monday.



Jazz Hands: City College Norwich Dance troupe performing on the main stage at WorldSkills



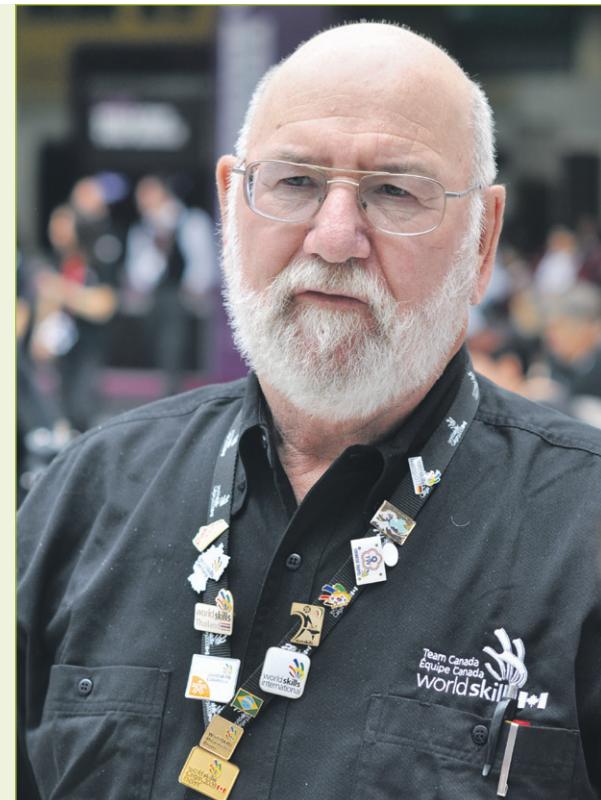
Around the world skills: Cabinet makers measuring up on the first day of competition

Clockwise from left: Team UK's Chris Wallis, formally of Chichester College, Australia's Ben Cooper, Brazil's Rafael Trombini, Spain's José Baró, Estonia's Silver Kämärä



Sue Smith, director of student learning at Wroclawine Wood Arts College said: "This has been an absolutely fabulous event. We bought 50 students down, a four hour journey, and, it's been absolutely fabulous. Students can get too focussed and become blinkered about their futures, what WorldSkills has done is open out students' eyes to what's possible. It's our responsibility as teachers to give out students every opportunity to see what's out there, what's possible. Today not only have our students seen those possibilities, they've been able to have a go, and get a little taste of what opportunity feels like."

WorldSkills visitor Alan Green from Canada took time out to talk to *FE Week*. He told us: "This is my fourth WorldSkills, skills in Canada aren't as highly regarded as academic knowledge. At my college, they just closed my Electronics department and bought in a Law school. "The money goes to universities, but I think it's changing. We're trying to make a change."



Nick Summers (left) meets Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards at WorldSkills



Bird is the word: WorldSkills 2011 mascot



Getting excited about food art!

FE Week has a go at WorldSkills!

Nick Summers

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FE Week News Reporter Nick Summers gets into the spirit of WorldSkills London 2011 by 'having a go' at the trade skills on offer

WorldSkills has been cleverly dubbed the 'skills Olympics' - but to think of it merely as a tournament would be short-sighted. The aim of the event is not only to inspire visitors through the competition, but to encourage them to try some of the professions for themselves.

The 'Have a Go' activities were designed to get the public involved and try various skills. Booths were dotted all over the ExCel London and attracted plenty of attention thanks to huge billboards shouting "I am... ready to have a go!" These workshops were open plan and designed to represent and reflect the surrounding trades.

The activities, to name just a few, included plastering, carpentry, airbrushing and virtual car painting, hair styling, making wooden rocking horses and chocolate welding.

So in the spirit of WorldSkills (and with a bit of bribery from my editor) I got stuck in and tried as many vocational skills as possible.

My first challenge was to change the rear tire on a Honda motorcycle. Visitors were timed to see how long it took them to remove a bolt and washer, remove the rear calibre and slide out the spindle connecting the tyre. This was then followed by a new rear tyre, which

visitors needed to use to put the bike back together again. Tricky.

The wheels were particularly heavy and I was surprised at the strength needed to use the ratchet gun and wrench. One of the mechanics was on hand to make sure I didn't damage any of the equipment, and I was very impressed with just how hands-on I was allowed to get with the task.

Needless to say my final time for the activity was appalling (no surprise there). Even so, I felt that the task was a realistic glimpse of a profession that would be difficult to reproduce in a college prospectus or open day.

Tiling was next on my list. 'How hard could it be to stick some ceramics to a wall?' I thought with blissful ignorance.

To start with, the activity was made far harder by the tile design itself. The various slabs joined together to form a colourful union jack, and it was infuriatingly hard to try and sort them out and put them in their appropriate places. Sticking them to the wall proved even more challenging.

Putting plaster onto the various tools and spreading it with a thin consistency required a level of skill that I obviously didn't have. The WorldSkills staff were keen to show me how to handle the grey goo with the necessary precision, but to be honest I knew I was a lost hope. Time for something else.

When I think of Bentley cars, I think of designers in smoky rooms, burly mechanics in steel factories and pristine businessmen in immaculate showrooms. Sewing does not come to mind. Yet this was the profession being shown off by the traditional and luxury British car company, offering visitors the chance to finish some cross stitching on a steering wheel.

I saw numerous young men scoff initially at the idea of sewing, but they soon changed their

minds when they realised which company was behind the activity (show them a flash car and they'll do anything – fact). It was refreshing to see the admirable care and craft that goes into car manufacturing, and I think it reminded many people of the different professions that are out there.

Waltham Forest College were offering skills arguably a little more 'hip' and modern. An instructor from Streetlife Radio taught me how to use a pair of turntables, keeping in tempo with the music and 'fading' across to various tracks. The timing was really tricky and it took me numerous attempts to finally nail a session and put two songs in perfect harmony. Based on the feedback from passers-by, I bet the classes are a resounding success at the college.

Throughout the day I also had the chance to sit in a Formula 1 racing car, try my hand as a racing jockey and even apply various facial

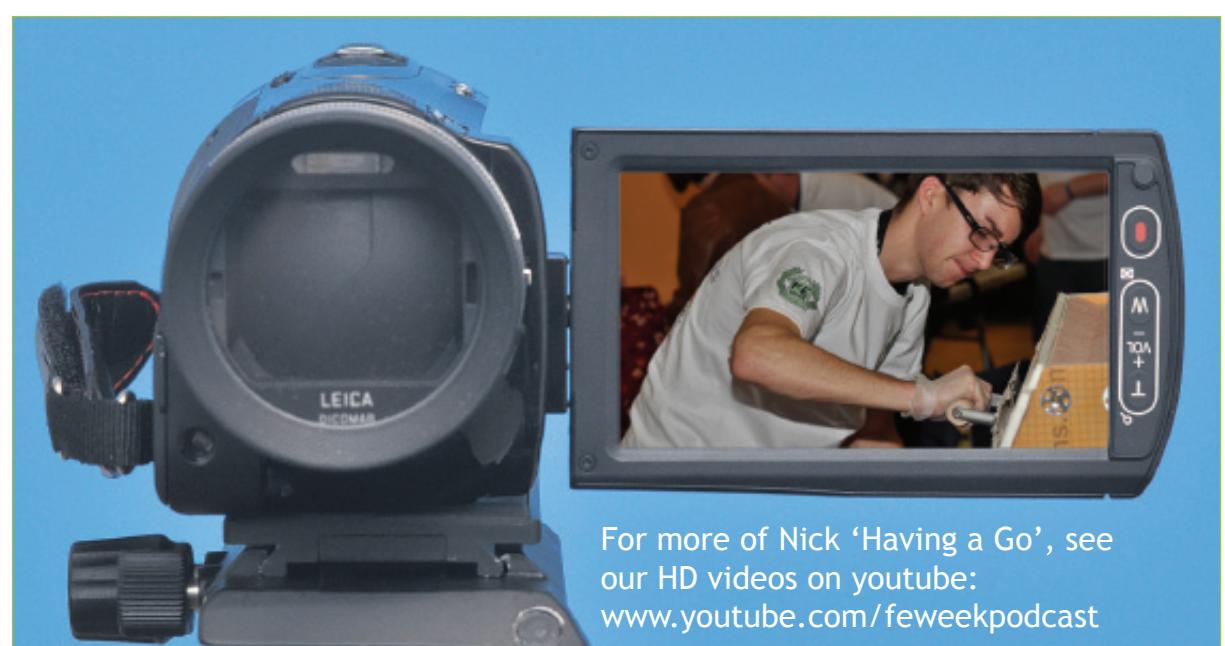
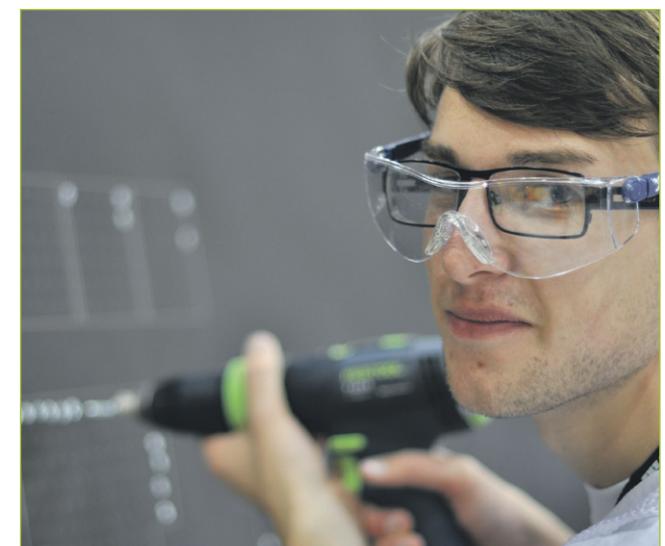
masks.

You name it and WorldSkills London 2011 was offering it. Many of the activities were also child friendly, encouraging little ones to try simpler tasks such as plumbing puzzles and building cardboard furniture.

Everything on offer was exciting, fresh and hands-on. It was the perfect opportunity for any school leaver or potential learner to consider a vocational profession, not only by seeing what they enjoyed the most, but also by seeing what they were best at.

Team UK and the inevitable medals table will no doubt grab most of the headlines at WorldSkills, but I'd argue that training providers and young visitors are the real event winners. The first day of the competition was a resounding success and the 'Have a Go' activities helped unquestionably to inspire the future of Britain.





For more of Nick 'Having a Go', see our HD videos on youtube: www.youtube.com/feweekpodcast



FE Week jobs



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Consultant

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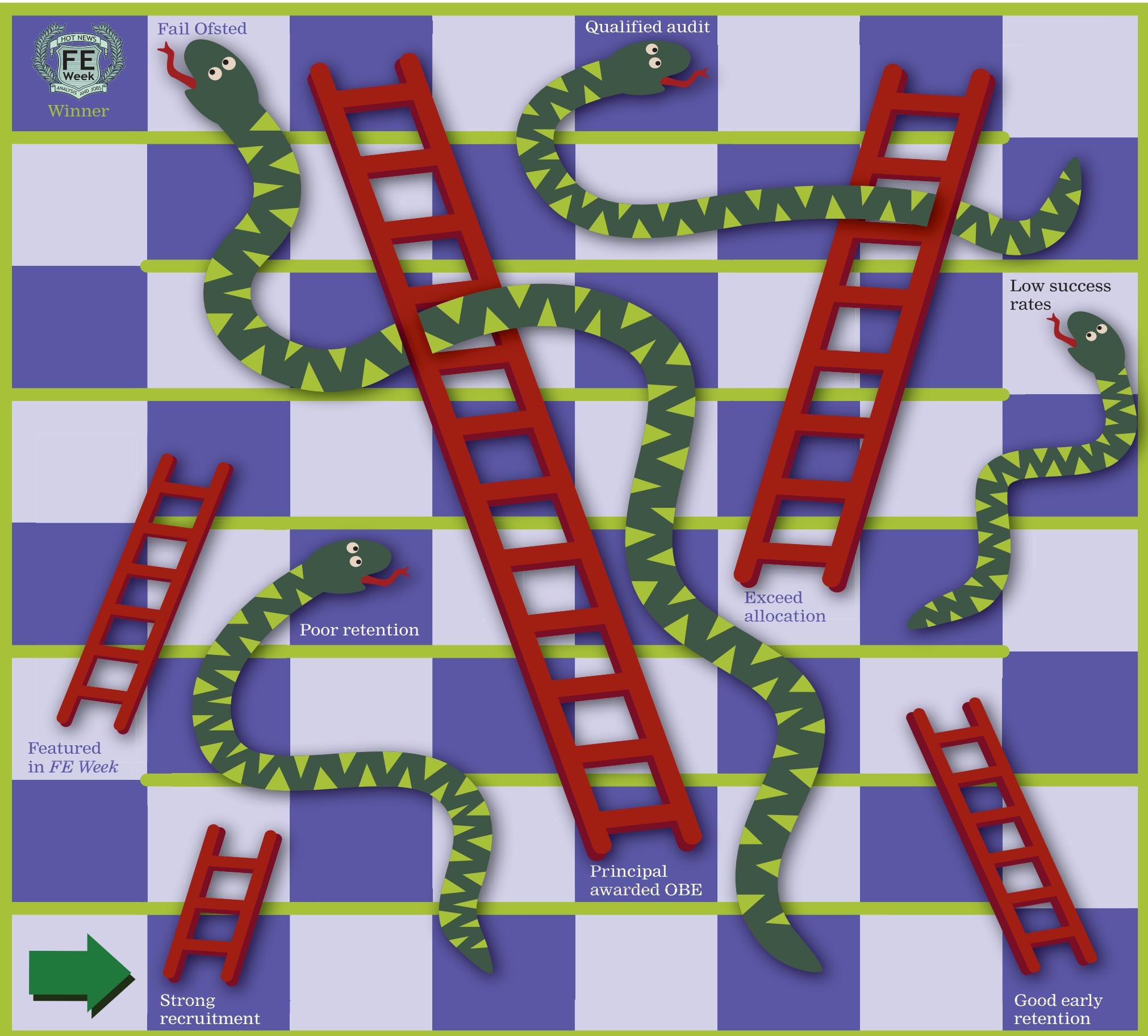
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FE Week Snakes & Ladders

Have a little fun on your coffee break with *FE Week's* Snakes & Ladders game!

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